(c) For economic development of minorities, including Muslims, the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation, a Public Sector Undertaking under the aegies of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, has been set up. The objective of the Corporation is to provide concessional credit to weaker sections amongst minorities for starting self-employment ventures.

Participation of handicapped team in the World Summer Games

2821. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recently a team of 105 handicapped/ mentally retarded children, coaches and managers went to Dublin, Ireland to participate in the World Summer Games;

(b) whether the team won 110 medals out of which 34 were gold; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to reward the childrren who have brought credit to the nation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL) : (a) to (c) The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment was requested by a Special Olympics, Bharat for financial assistance and it sanctioned Rs. 20 lakh as a grant in aid, to facilitate participation of an Indian team of 103 mentally challenged children, coaches and managers in the World Summer Games held in June 2003 at Dublin, Ireland. It has been reported by Special Olympics, Bharat that the team has won 110 medals including 34 gold. The Ministry has no plans to provide any further assistance.

Criteria for senior citizens

2822. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there are different criteria at different places for senior citizenship;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to put a uniform criteria for the senior citizens; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Various Ministries/Departments are following different age criteria for extending facilities/concessions to senior citizens. The Railways give 30% concession in Mail/Express fares and the fares of the Rajdhani/Shatabadi/ Jan Shatabdi trains to the senior citizens aged 60 years and above. The other Ministries/Departments namely, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Communications, are providing concession to senior citizens aged 65 years and above.

(c) The National Policy on Older Persons recognizes a person who has attained the age of 60 plus as a senior citizen. The Ministry has taken up the matter of recognising senior citizens as persons aged 60 years and above with the concerned Ministries/Deptts. However, the different Ministries/Departments have taken their own decisions as regards age for extending facilities/concessions based on commercial and other considerations.

(d) Does not arise.

Development of Wakf properties

2823. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the disbursement by the Central Wakf Council for development of Wakf properties during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of the beneficiary Wakf estates, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) the number of old projects completed and the number of new projects initiated during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise; and

(d) the break up of the beneficiary Wakf estates, State/UT-wise since the inception of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI) : (a) and (b) Information is given at Statement-I (*See* below)